

A

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

With Observations on TRANSACTIONS at Home.

Thursday, May 17. 1705.

I Cannot but think it Deserves a Place in these Papers, to note the strange promiscuous Variety of things in the present Scene of Elections.

What Infinite Diversity do we find in the Circumstances of every Place where Men stand to be Chosen, and from whence abundance of useful Observations may be gather'd, and a By-stander may with Ease see the Misfortune that attends this Unhappy Kingdom, by the woful Perverting, Turning and Twisting the best Constitution in the World.

We have lately had Two or Three Acts of Parliament to prevent Bribery and Corruption in Elections. I have already Noted it as my Observation, That we have in *England*, the best Laws the world Executed of any Nation in the World. Never was Treating, Bribing, Buying of Voices, Freedoms and Freeholds, and all the Corrupt Practices in the World, so open and bare-fac'd in *England*, as since these Severe Laws against it, have been made.

I once Advertis'd in this Paper, that a Book was coming out, Entitled, *The Efficacy and Extent of English Acts of Parliament; or, An Account of the Treatings, Bribings, Buyings, Sellings, Quarrells, Fightings, and Abominable Practices, now in their full Exercise, to Debauch the Electors to give their Votes in the Ensuing Election,* but when I came to Enter into the vast Field, I

found such an *Ocean of Villany*, such a *Depth of Corruption*, that it was endless to finish it; and I thought in vain to begin, having no Leisure to Write Large Volumes in Folio, upon so Unpleasing a Subject.

I think the Story I formerly told of the Act making to punish Adultery with Death, which the Duke of *Buckingham* would have call'd, *An Act for the better Concealing the Sins of Fornication and Adultery*, would hold here; and these Acts for preventing of Bribery, &c. should have been Entitled, *An Act for the better Concealing Bribery and Ill Practices in Elections*.

Innumerable are the Mischiefs and Ill Consequences which attend this Practice, Innumerable the Arts and Contrivances to Evade the Literal Articles of the Law, and yet offend the real meaning. I cannot help saying, in the View I have taken of the Elections, now carrying on in *England*, and in which the Nation is now so Exceeding Busie; I see nothing but Bribery Corruption, Malice, Fury, Slander, Envy, and all sorts of Ill Practices, and that in so high a Degree, and in so Various a manner acted, that I know not where to begin.

The Parties are Numerous, and not to be reckon'd up, the main Division, indeed, is *High Church* and *Low Church*, *Taskers* and *Sneakers* on one Hand, *Whigs* and *Dissenters* on the other; and even among these there is an Infinite

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Variety

Variety again, and Private Interest so Guides People to or from, that not one of these are Entirely True to themselves.

A Few Honest Men I must allow on all Sides, but besides them, we have such a Medley of Ambitious Monsters, that profess one thing, and act another; that look one way, and row another, that no Man alive knows where to have them.

Here are *Sneaking High Churchmen, Mercenary Low Church, Covetous and Cowardly Dissenters, Men of Every Side, of all Parties; that call themselves this, but Vote for that; a Whig Tenant Votes for a Tacking Landlord; a Low Church Nephew, Votes for his High Church Uncle, because he is his Relation; as if the Relation to our Native Country, and the preserving our Religion and Liberty to our Posterity, were not nearer than Humouring the Civilities of a Family.*

We have here Men of all Principles Voting for Separate Persuasions, Men of no Principles at all, Vote for Conscience sake; all are Busy, and Vote as Retrograde as they Talk; some Vote for their Friends against their Interest; some Vote for their Interest against their Friends; some Vote against their Conscience, to their Gain; some Vote by their Consciences to their Loss; *High Church and Papists* joyn together to Vote for *Whigs*; *Low Church and Dissenters* joyn to Vote for *Atheists*; *Papists* Choose *Dissenters*, to secure the *Church*, and *Dissenters* Vote for *Tackers* and *Jacobites* to preserve the Toleration.

We are now Busy Choosing in the City, and 'tis a Dark Reflection to look into the Principles from whence the Various Crowds of People proceed; what Rancour, what Spleen appears in the Actions and Countenances of the People, Wounding and Cutting the Throats of each others Reputation, searching into all the Actions of one anothers Lives, Writing every Man's Faults, and all their Faults, and more than all, in their Foreheads.

The Author of this has been Throng'd with Papers full of Invidious Characters, Reproaches, Letters of Slander and Scandal on every Side; and the Adjournment of our *Scandal Club*, seems to be a Loss to them.

I have Inveterate Speeches, Little Nasty Cannibies, Strain'd and Improv'd Stories, to Blacken the Characters of all the Eight Candidates, and every Side shows, that there are

some among them, that love Scandal, and fly to those Little Shifts to carry on their Interest, which ought to be below Men of Honour, Conscience, or Good Manners.

I have been offended very much, I confess, at the Publishing the Names of the City Candidates in the News-Papers, and in small Bills handed about the Streets, which seems to me a putting the very Gentlemen to the same use, as most People do their Papers. But above all, I am discomposed at the Writing under these Advertisements——As follows, *Being all Gentlemen of known Ability, Loyalty, &c.*

Why really, Gentlemen, this seems very odd,

1. If their Ability, Loyalty, &c. are known, what need this Publication?

2. If they are not known, your Own-ought to be question'd for putting them up.

On the other hand, if these Gentlemen's Abilities are Unquestion'd of all Sides, or else your Own are Expos'd, What need of all this Clamour, and Unchristian Heat? What need of the Assistance of Scandal, Defamation and Reproach, which are the Offsprings of Hell, and Shame of *Englishmen* and *Christians*?

Here are four Gentlemen of a Side, each Side has, 'tis to be suppos'd, set up those they like best: Can you not Poll Easy and Free, and let those that have the most Voices be return'd Peaceably? With a Civility becoming Citizens, Neighbours, Protestants, and English Men? really Gentlemen-Liverymen, the Violences thus acted on either hand; the Warmth, the Envyings, Reflections, and Slanders on every Side, are the Actions of such as are Enemies to your Honour, your Interest, your Safety, and your Peace.

From this Principle, as much as in me lies, I move you all to a Temper of Charity and Good Manners; and whatever the Feuds are in the Counties and small Towns, where People know no better, the Citizens of London should act from better Principles, and show the World they know better how to give an Example to their Country.

Peace is the End of Society and Government, and is the Beauty as well as Advantage of Life; and with what Face can that Man look into his own Life, that opens the Secret Doors of his Neighbours Infirmities? Since, I doubt, few must read this Paper, but what may, with its Author acknowledge, Frailties and Infirmities possess us all, and no Man can know so much of

of his Neighbour, but he must know more of himself.

If then we have such Potent Reasons from our own Miscarriages, to bear with those of other People, what shall we say to Malice, Slander, Forgery, and Lying; as they are Born of the Devil, they are propagated for his Interest, and by his Direction; and I cannot but think my self, Gentlemen, exceedingly Oblig'd to you, that would have me have a Hand in it.

I shall, to the last Moment, Declare War against Vice, and freely Expose Scandalous Practices — But I am sorry to see some Gentlemen should so far Mistake me, as to think that fixing Crimes upon Particular Persons, writing them in Capitals upon their Characters, and Calculating the Time to do it to the Nicety in which it may be prejudicial to their Private Interests, or to Byass a Party; such Prejudice cannot belong to the underraking of Exposing Vice, but will be rather a Vice it self.

Those Gentlemen therefore, if such they can be, who Expect to have the Candidates of either Side Expos'd, who Distinguish Men by Name, Reproach them with Villifying Nicknames, and *Billingsgate* Expressions, are Desir'd to send their Letters to some Body else, for I can by no means oblige them.

I make no doubt, the Eyes of the *English* Nation are open, I Reflect with Joy and Satisfaction, that almost in all Places, the Miscarriage of our last Parliament, has an Effectual Influence on the Election of a New: That the Gentlemen, who singled themselves out, and made themselves Remarkable in the Attempt upon our Liberties, are singled out by the Country, to be laid by, as Persons not fit, at least for the present, to be Trusted again.

So Effectually do Men, by their own Mismanagement, fix their Characters, and do that for their Enemies, which they could not do for themselves.

We need not go farther for this, than the County of *Essex*, where you see a Gentleman of a Worthy, Honourable Family, Famous for Men of Merit, and possessing a Gallant Estate, and who carried his last Election, in spite of all Opposition, by near one Hundred Freeholders, loses it now by above four Hundred, only for the Ill Opinion the *English* Nation has justly Conceived of the Preposterous Attempt of the *Tacking*; the Consequences of which,

like a Danger Escap'd, Frights People with the Reflection; and the more they look back, the more they are fill'd with Horrour, to see how near they were to Destruction, and upon how small a Thread depended, Law, Religion, Liberty, Government, Queen, and all that can be Dear to a Nation.

As thus the *English* Nation are come to themselves, and the Matter will be secure:

Peace and Patience, Gentlemen, Covet no Victories over your Brethren; they have done Foolishly, and been forward in a Blind Attempt to hurt us, but they have miscarry'd, the Snare's Broke, the Nation's Escap'd, the People have Rejected them, but Drop them Easily; let us not Insult, nor Ill Treat them, secure your future Felicity, by Choice of better Men, but Treat the Mistaken Gentlemen still, as Gentlemen, and give them room, as well as Time, to Recollect themselves, and see their Mistake.


As to the Incurrigible, Treat them with the Neglect they merit; as you are out of their Danger, so to let them know you fear them not, is a Contempt sufficient; let us go on to secure the Nation against their Worst Attempts; and as for their Persons, Gentlemen, no farther Resentment can do you any Service; and to do them Injury, would be Unsuitable to the Principle of Peace, which all Wise Men wish for, and which the Nation, at this time in particular, is more than usually in need of.

Thus Elections will be carried on Peaceably, the Safety and Honour of the Nation secur'd, by much better means than Raillery, Banter, Slander, Calumny, and all the Unmanly and Unmannerly Methods of Malice and Ill Nature.

Whereas a Proposal has been made by the Author of this Paper, for Subscriptions to a Book in Folio, Entitled, *Jure Divino*; or, *A Satyr upon Tyranny and Passive Obedience*. To which, abundance of Gentlemen having long since Subscrib'd, and the Time seeming long for its coming out, some very Good Reasons having obliged the Author to put a stop to it.

These are to give Notice, That the said Book is now in the Press, and shall go on to be Printed with all Expedition: And for the further Satisfaction of the Subscribers, the Sheets may be seen every Day by any that please to give themselves that Trouble, at Mr. *J. Matthews*, as they come out of the Press.

All those Gentlemen, who have Collected Subscriptions for this Book, are Desir'd to send in an Account of what Number they have taken, there being no more to be Printed; than shall be given Notice, as Subscribed; and, if they please, to Pay the Subscription Money to Mr. Matthews in *Pilkington Court, Little Britain*, Receipts will be given there for it:

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